



September 8, 2004

California Performance Review Commission
Office of the Governor
Constituent Affairs
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

Commissioners:

I strongly give my support for maintaining the positions of elected county superintendents of schools and county boards of education. I believe that transferring the authority of the superintendent and the board to a regional office will reduce the effectiveness of the County Office of Education in provision of programs, services and support for education and youth in Merced County.

Critical Merced County Office of Education (MCOE) functions include service to the most needy children: students in court and community schools and students with disabilities. Other programs serving unique populations and needs include regional occupational programs, migrant education, court and community school environmental education, independent study and a charter school.

MCOE also works as a partner with the education community, preschool through university, as well as with local government, public service agencies, business, workforce development organizations, and parents to promote the education and welfare of youth in Merced County.

Fiscal and academic accountability are also critical functions of MCOE. District budget oversight is comprehensive. Teacher credentialing and training are provided. Administrator training and support are offered. Instructional resources are provided to districts.

Eliminating local elected officials who provide direction and oversight of MCOE activities will reduce the effectiveness, responsiveness and accountability of those functions and will ultimately reduce the quality and quantity of education and youth services in the County. I urge the Commission to reject the CPR recommendation to regionalize K-12 education.

Very sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Joan D. Sortini".

Joan D. Sortini, Executive Director